

1 THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR
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7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
8 WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
9 AT SEATTLE

10 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

11 Plaintiff,

12 v.

13 EFRAIN LUNA-RODRIGUEZ,

14 Defendant.

CASE NO. CR20-0092-JCC

ORDER

15 This matter comes before the Court on the parties' joint motion to proceed with a guilty
16 plea by videoconference. (Dkt. No. 647). The Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons
17 explained below.

18 Under General Order 04-20, felony pleas and sentencing may proceed by video or
19 telephone conferencing if "the district judge in a particular case finds for specific reasons that the
20 plea or sentencing in that case cannot be further delayed without serious harm to the interests of
21 justice." W.D. Wash. General Order 04-20 (March 30, 2020); *see also* W.D. Wash. General
22 Order 14-21 (Dec. 22, 2021) (extending duration of General Order 04-20).

23 The parties have reached a plea agreement and Mr. Luna-Rodriguez would like to enter a
24 guilty plea in accordance with that agreement to move forward and resolve the matter. (Dkt. No.
25 647 at 1.) But an in-person proceeding would require travel from Southern California, where he
26 is currently subject to pretrial supervision. (*Id.* at 3.) Rather than delay a change of plea until

1 COVID conditions abate, Mr. Luna-Rodriguez would like to enter a plea now by
2 videoconference. (*Id.*) Mr. Luna-Rodriguez has a strong interest in the speedy resolution of his
3 plea process, and further delays would prolong the stress and anxiety he faces as the current
4 public health situation creates uncertainty for in-person court proceedings. *See* W.D. Wash.
5 General Order 01-22 (Jan. 7, 2022) (imposing limitations for certain in-person activities based on
6 the recent uptick in COVID-19 cases).

7 The Court FINDS that, for the reasons described above, the plea hearing cannot be
8 delayed without serious harm to the interests of justice. Accordingly, the motion for a remote
9 change of plea hearing (Dkt. No. 647) is GRANTED.

10 DATED this 14th day of January 2022.

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John C. Coughenour
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE